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FM AMEMBASSY HANOI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9639
INFO RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH PRIORITY 5851
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0303

C O N F I D E N T I A L HANOI 000456

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

FOR WHA/CCA (ZAMBRAN), EAP/MLS

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TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [CU](#) [VM](#)
SUBJECT: VIETNAM-CUBA: TITLE III OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: STATE 48487

Classified By: PolCouns Brian Aggeler. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

¶1. (C) Embassy contacts at the MFA and MFA-affiliated Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam insist that Vietnam and Cuba continue to enjoy warm "fraternal" relations. Absent fundamental change in either country, there is little prospect that Vietnam will substantially support U.S. priorities for Cuba, as outlined in Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act.

¶2. (C) Specific answers to reftel questions are as follows:

A.) Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba?

-- No. Vietnam hews to a strict policy of non-interference based on its "friendship to all" foreign policy and consistently opposes all country-specific human rights interventions. Beyond this, Vietnam maintains a cordial relationship with Cuba, based on ideology and a shared history as members of the Soviet-led COMECON.

B.) Has the host country made public statements or undertaken other governmental actions, such as resolutions in the national assembly condemning human rights abuses in Cuba, or taken actions in support of civil society in Cuba through host country's diplomatic missions or other fora?

-- No. In addition to the factors mentioned above, Vietnam's National Assembly has little discretion to deviate from policy lines dictated by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV).

C.) Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and the host country in the past six months?

-- According to Nguyen Khanh Van from the MFA Latin America Office, there were no major diplomatic visits over the past six months. The MFA did, however, report visits to Cuba by less prominent officials including: the President of Vietnam's General Confederation of Labor, Dang Ngoc Trung (April 30 - May 4); Deputy Finance Minister Xuan Ha (March 9-14); members of the Hanoi People's Council (February 25-28); and the Minister of Information and Communications, Le Doan Hop.

D.) What is the nature of investments (and names, if known) that host country businesses have in Cuba?

-- According to Vietnam's Foreign Investment Agency, up to the end of 2008 Vietnam had \$44.54 million in investment in Cuba, most of it in oil exploration projects by state-owned PetroVietnam. In late 2008, Vietnam announced that the state-owned Housing and State Development Corporation would invest in several real estate tourism projects in Cuba, in partnership with Cuba's Palmares Group. The first project,

according to Vietnamese press reports would be a housing and recreation complex in Colodera Bauta, Cuba. In 2009, the Vietnamese telecom firm Viettel, owned by the armed forces, announced that it was considering investing in Cuban telecom services.

E.) Are there any bilateral trade agreements or other cooperative agreements between host country and Cuba?

-- In April 2009, the two countries signed an MOU to share rice production expertise. Vietnam led a trade delegation to Cuba in May 2009 that produced deals to supply Cuba with plastic bags for sugar and a cultural promotion agreement for Cuban artists in Vietnam, according to press reports. These are the latest in a long series of cooperation agreements between the two countries in areas such as construction, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, fisheries, oil exploration, finance, culture and sports.

F.) Are there any exchange programs between host country and Cuba, including but not limited to: scholarships for host country nationals to study in Cuba; Cuban-paid medical travel for host country nationals; and Cuban doctors working in host country?

-- Vietnam and Cuba maintain an annual academic exchange program that provides 20 university and graduate scholarships, with half studying in Cuba, half in Vietnam. There are no Cuban doctors working in Vietnam.

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